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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the vodun priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[1]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her—something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his mother's name in the record of births, though he may and often does take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's property that children born of the various types of matings are said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particularly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward those children of their father. Children of plural wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a monogamous union, "legal" or "placée," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the proverb: "This is natural."

one with the Holy Virgin. St Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglesaw, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Maraua Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with lwa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one lwa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the lwa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some lwa names may be the result of a devotee's arising upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a lwa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langaje* is taken to be a lwa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a lwa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of lwa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single lwa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Azaa, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying lwa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coupé-nan-Mè—Coupé-in-the-Sea. A lwa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the lwa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Noel Alexis, is often called Alexis Noel.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males.

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,303 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the ratio would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population.